

# MASTER PLAN CHESTERFIELD COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER

Adopted By The Board of Supervisors  
March 8, 1989

## Background

In November 1987 Glave Newman Anderson Architects, Wilbur Smith Traffic Engineers and Higgins Associates Land Planners were commissioned to undertake a new Master Plan for the Chesterfield County Government Center. The previous plan, prepared in the late 1970's, had not anticipated the rate of Chesterfield County's rapid growth in the ensuing years.

The original nineteenth century governmental buildings are clustered in a highly urbane group of small buildings around the old courthouse on Ironbridge Road. Subsequent buildings, reflecting the more complex administrative demands of twentieth century government, are larger and less finely scaled and have been sited along existing service routes presenting a somewhat haphazard public appearance.

The new Master Plan is intended not only to rationalize the relationships between existing county buildings on the 600 acre tract and to provide an orderly framework for future growth, but also and just as importantly to enhance the bright image of progressive county government, so that the seat of government will become a functionally self-sustaining place capable of inspiring affection, loyalty and commitment from staff and citizenry alike.

## Methodology

The planning team employed the classical methodology of data collection, analysis and synthesis leading to a recommended plan for implementation, combined with a strong emphasis on interactive workshops involving planners and those planned for, at which a wide range of alternative solutions to given problems were developed and resolved.

In Workshop I planners reviewed their notes from interviews with department heads and others and tested preliminary conclusions about space needs, traffic and parking problems, and environmental conditions. Subsequent

Workshops 11 through V took up alternative sitespecific planning strategies within the context of a developing consensus on the organization of the entire site, leading to the preparation of this recommended plan.

## The Recommended Plan

The recommended plan proposes that the majority of future administrative office construction should take place along a very strongly defined new four-lane, median divided spine road running due north from Ironbridge Road near its present intersection with Krause Road through the existing fairgrounds, past the new Human Services building, to Courthouse Road Extended, and ultimately to Route 288. In addition to its functional necessity, this new road would be the primary ceremonial element in the Government Center; as such it would be formally landscaped in the style of a great boulevard, with a double row of trees in the median and trees along both margins. A second collector road is proposed to run east from Ironbridge Road terminating at the entrance to the Human Services Building. A detailed study will be required to determine the design for Lori Road's western termination. Future public buildings will be built in phases along the west side of the new Boulevard, overlooking permanent open space surrounding new drainage control lakes which lead northwest toward Krause Road through the vicinity of the existing Safety Town layout.

The third (and most informal) new entrance road into the Government Center complex is proposed from just North of Salem Church Elementary School west to Kraus Road below Bird School.

The plan envisions over the long term that the historic courthouse area would be developed into the symbolic center of county government. By converting the current roadside parking lots into well landscaped lawns, both sides of Ironbridge Road will be unified into a single entity. The old Courthouse, Magnolia Grange, and Castlewood House within this setting will define the county's physical connection with its past.

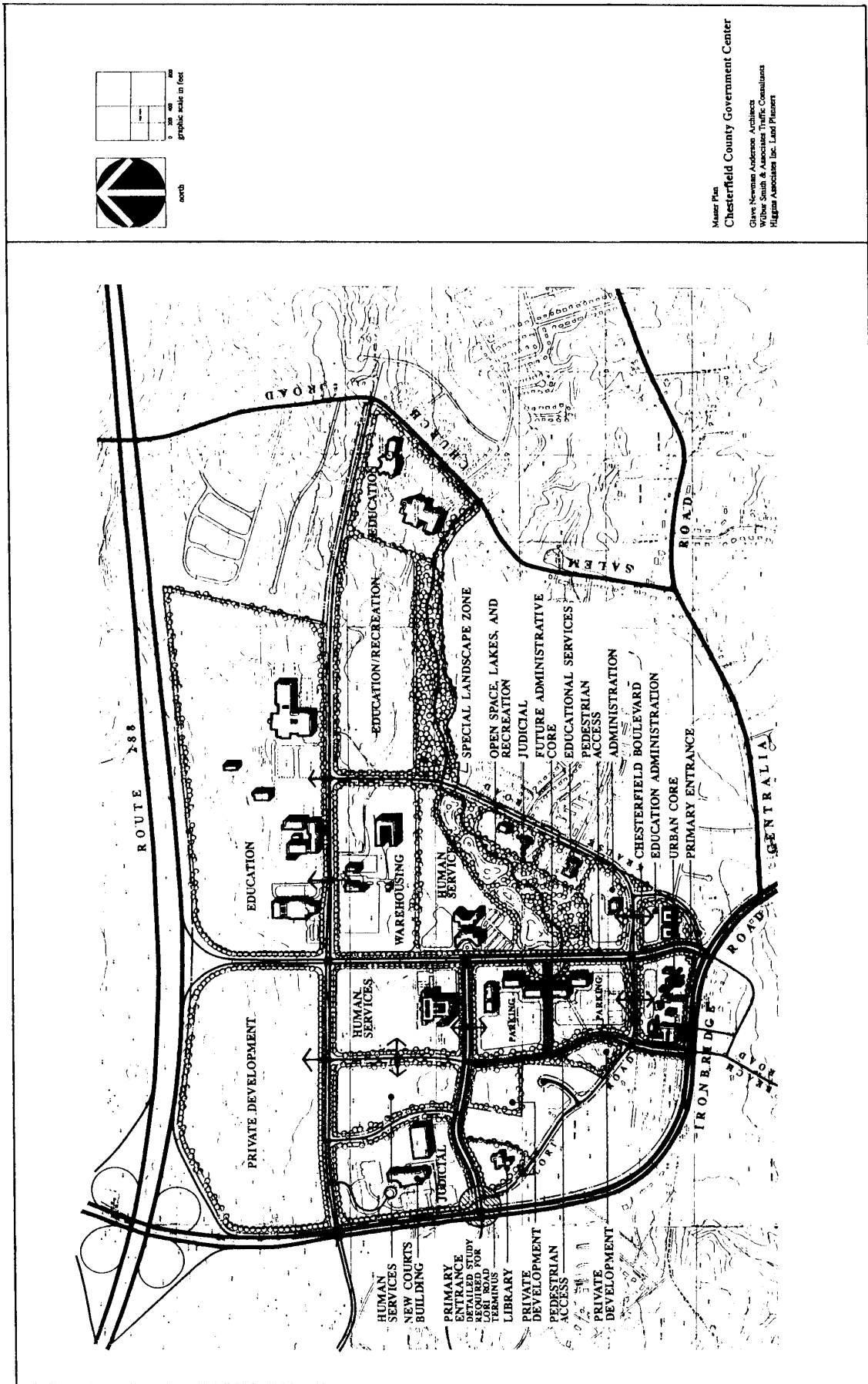
The 600 acres of county-owned land at the seat of government is roughly equivalent in area to all of downtown Richmond and will provide amply for any conceivable administrative growth needs. The plan suggests that approximately 50 acres of land on the perimeter adjacent to the "Spencer Tract" and about eight acres next to "Branches Trace" could be sold for private development, thus providing a source of partial funding for public improvements.

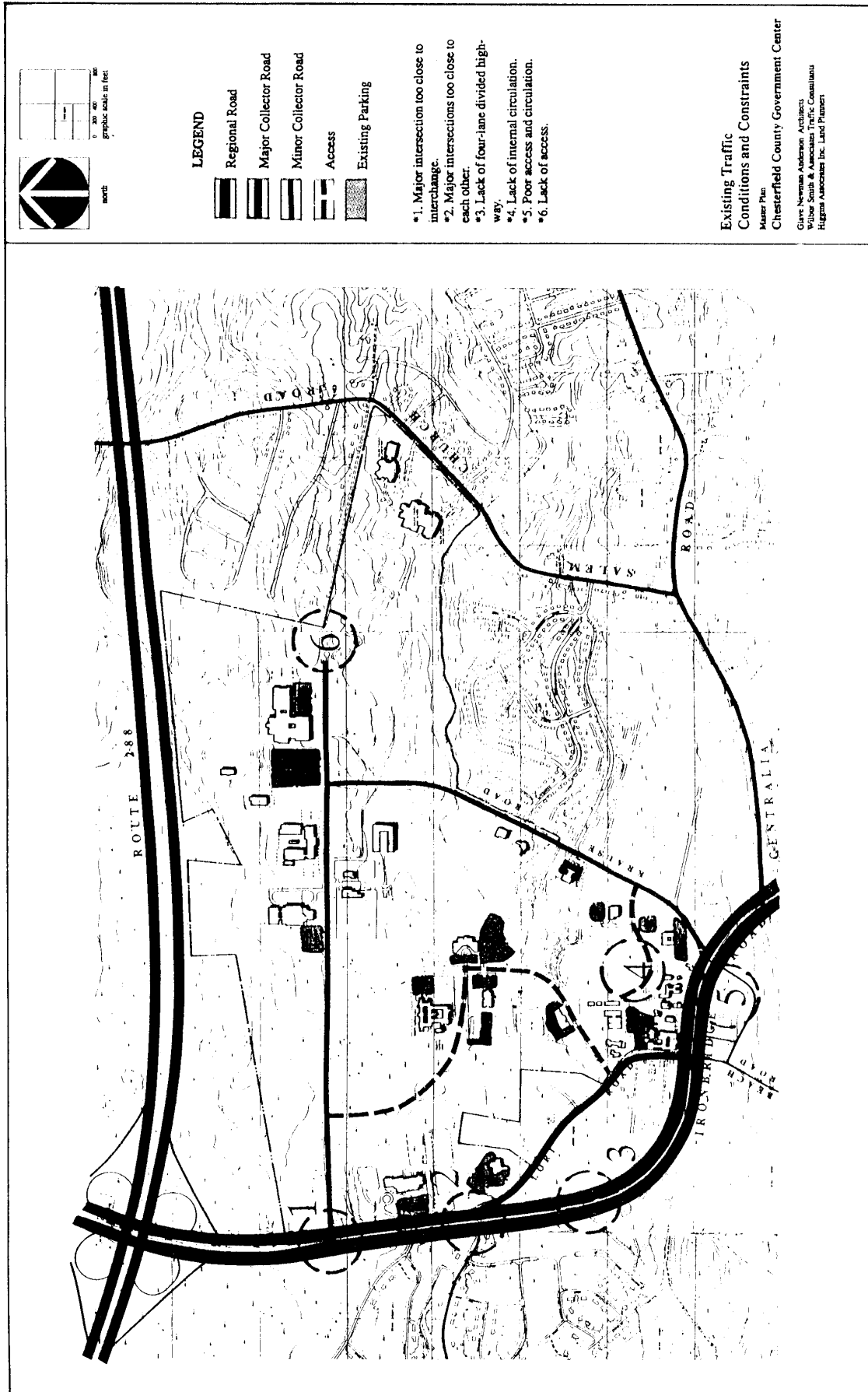
CHESTERFIELD COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER MASTER PLAN  
PERSONNEL/SPACE NEEDS ANALYSIS

	1987		1997		1997	COMMENTS
	Population	SF Actual (1,000's) *	Population	SF Needed (1,000's) *	Difference (1,000SF)	
						General Comments: Beyond 1997 we will assume that the county will continue to grow at a rate of 4% per year and that county employment will follow at about the same rate as presently. Because some county government growth will take place off site, physical growth on site will be at a lesser rate.
Administration of Government	174	34	272	52	+ 18	These activities have a close working relationship with one another and have a high level of public contact.
Assessment and Collections	106	15	142	29	+ 14	These departments should be near the Government Administration offices.
Administration of Justice	15	2	21	5	+ 3	The jail will remain in present location through 1998, but will relocate to site near Courts Building after that date.
Public Safety	602	22	957	78	+ 56	The greatest present need is for Police Department space. These departments should be near the Government Administration offices.
Human Services	457	103	569	113	+ 10	Some future clinic growth will occur off site but land area should be provided for a possible CCRC, group homes, and for doubling the size of the MH/MR, Social and Health Services departments.
Community Devel. Including Utilities	340	23	450	50	+ 27	This functional unit should be near the Government Administration offices.
School Administration	---	25	---	100	+ 75	This growth can take place in its present vicinity or possibly near the SE corner of Krause Road and Courthouse Road Extended.
Totals	1,694/ 1,210 daily avg.	224	2,411/ 1,622 daily avg.	427	+203	Office space needs to increase by approximately 90% in the next 10 year period to accommodate projected needs.

\* (Non-inclusive of animal control, nursing home, courts & garage/radio)

TABLE 1





## Perceptions

Interviews and group discussions with county department heads and others brought out a number of concerns and suggestions for improvement, as well as recognition of things that work well currently.

The lack of a main entrance ranked as a major problem: How do visitors get into the complex and distributed to the agency or service they are seeking? Poor signage contributes to this, as do confusing street names.

Many felt that the overall appearance was haphazard and lacking in order.

There was general agreement that the fairgrounds, Safety Town and the police and fire training facilities should be relocated to another site altogether.

A number of people were concerned that increasing physical decentralization of departments might discourage what is now felt to be healthy level of interdepartmental mixing. It was suggested that a centrally located recreational area might be helpful in this regard, as would intermixing private with public uses.

The plan should capitalize on the "triumvirate" of older buildings: the Courthouse, Magnolia Grange and Castlewood.

Several people mentioned that the trees particularly at the School Administration Building and at the library were an important asset. Finally, the overall appearance of the complex should say "this is a prosperous and well organized county".

## Space Needs

The county government now occupies about 224,000 s.f. of space, with an onsite population of 1700 persons. Conditions are generally overcrowded.

A space needs study completed by county staff during 1987 indicates that there will be a need for 427,000 s.f. to house a population of 2400 persons, by 1997.

These data which are exclusive of animal control, the nursing home, the courts, and the garage are illustrated in Table 1.

## Existing Traffic Conditions and Constraints

Government Center area is serviced by a hierarchical network of roads and highways. Ironbridge Road (Route 10) functions as a Regional Road, as will the future Route 288 which connects to Route 10 at a major interchange at the northwest corner of the study area.

Lori Road functions as a Major Collector Road.

Courthouse Road Extended and Krause Road, which together suggest a loop road around the Government Center, are defined as Minor Collector Roads.

Lucy Cot Road, Lucy Corr Court, and its proposed extension past the new Courts Building are Access Roads.

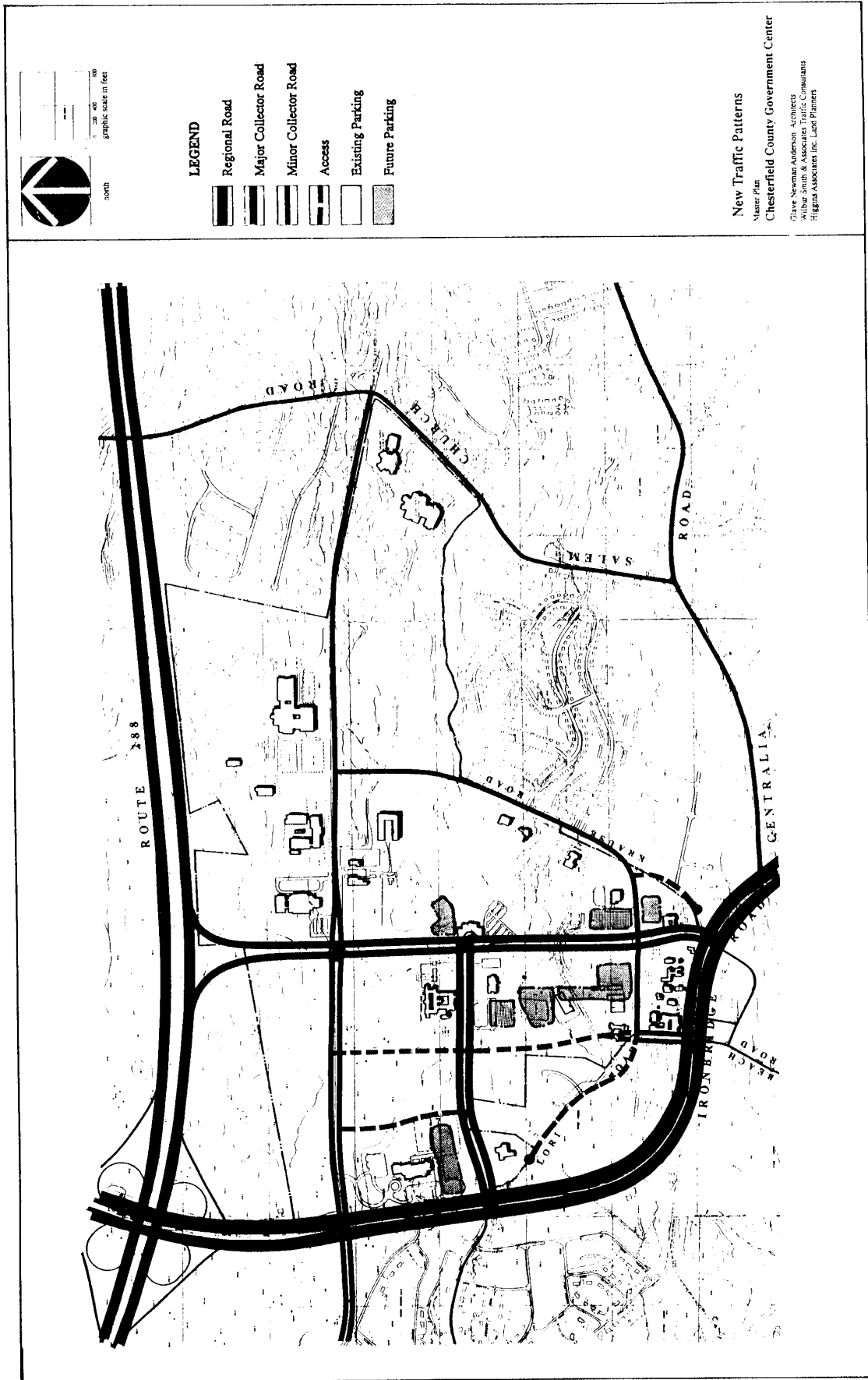
Approximately 1250 parking spaces are currently provided spread amongst several locations as indicated.

The chief problems are noted in Figure 1:

1. Courthouse Road Extended intersects Ironbridge Road too close to the Route 288 cloverleaf. South bound traffic on Ironbridge attempting a left turn onto Courthouse Road Extended will back up and block the south bound access ramp from Route 288 onto Ironbridge.
2. The Lori Road and Courthouse Road intersection are too close, causing left turn congestion on Ironbridge Road.
3. Ironbridge Road should be a fourlane divided highway north of Beach Road.
4. Traffic shortcuts across the parking lot south of the Fairgrounds to get from Krause Road to Lori Road.
5. Access to, and circulation within, the Government Center is generally poor and poorly signed.
6. Traffic from Salem Church Road has very poor access to the educational complex on Courthouse Road Extended.

## New Traffic Patterns

The primary element of the proposed new traffic plan is a heavily landscaped, four lane, median divided "boulevard" originating at the intersection



of Krause and Ironbridge Roads, and running north to Courthouse Road Extended and ultimately, with the private development of the Spencer Tract north of Courthouse Road Extended, on to I288. Where the boulevard is opened, Krause Road will be abandoned south of the School Administration Building.

A secondary entrance to the Government Center will occur just south of the new Courts Building and the existing Lori Road intersection with Ironbridge Road. (Lori Road should terminate at the entrance to the library.) This new road is proposed to begin at the intersection of Deerfield Road and Ironbridge Road, and will run along the line of Lucy Corr Court and end at the entrance to the Human Services Building.

A third entrance has been planned to the east of the Government Center. This road would begin at Salem Church Road, run north of Salem Church Elementary School along an unpaved subdivision road. It would then connect with Courthouse Road Extended at the existing culdesac. As an alternative, an access point south of Salem Church High School at Salem Church Road is also being examined.

At the present time, there is a median crossover at Ironbridge Road and Wagner's Way that serves as an access point to the Government Center. It is proposed that as traffic pattern improvements proceed within the Center, this median is to be closed, with rightin, rightout access only at Wagner's Way from Ironbridge Road.

As private land is developed along Ironbridge Road between the library and the existing Courthouse building, a road is planned that will connect Ironbridge Road with Lori Road. Low volume access roads will also be built as the need arises for further internal circulation along the lines shown in the Master Plan.

## Political and Environmental Opportunities and Constraints

A close examination of the physical constraints and opportunities that exist on a given site is critical to development of any kind. Such an examination leads to a more environmentally sensitive, economically sound, and physically feasible master plan. The Chesterfield County Government Center is no exception.

The initial phase of the planning process for the Chesterfield County Government Center involved the analysis of significant existing environmental and political conditions. Soils,

drainage patterns, topography, vegetation, and external development were all taken into serious consideration. Following is a brief account of the findings of this analysis process, and its impact on growth, both immediate and long range, for the Government Center.

### A. Soils

The Chesterfield County Government Center lies in the coastal plain of Chesterfield County. The Faceville-Gritney-Kempsville soil association characterizes the site area and is described as having "deep, well drained soils that have a dominantly clayey subsoil; on uplands."

There are a wide variety of soil types that exist on the site. For the purpose of this analysis, the soils have been classified into four categories: those that impose slight constraints to construction, those that impose moderate constraints to construction, those that impose severe constraints to construction, and those soils that are seasonably wet.

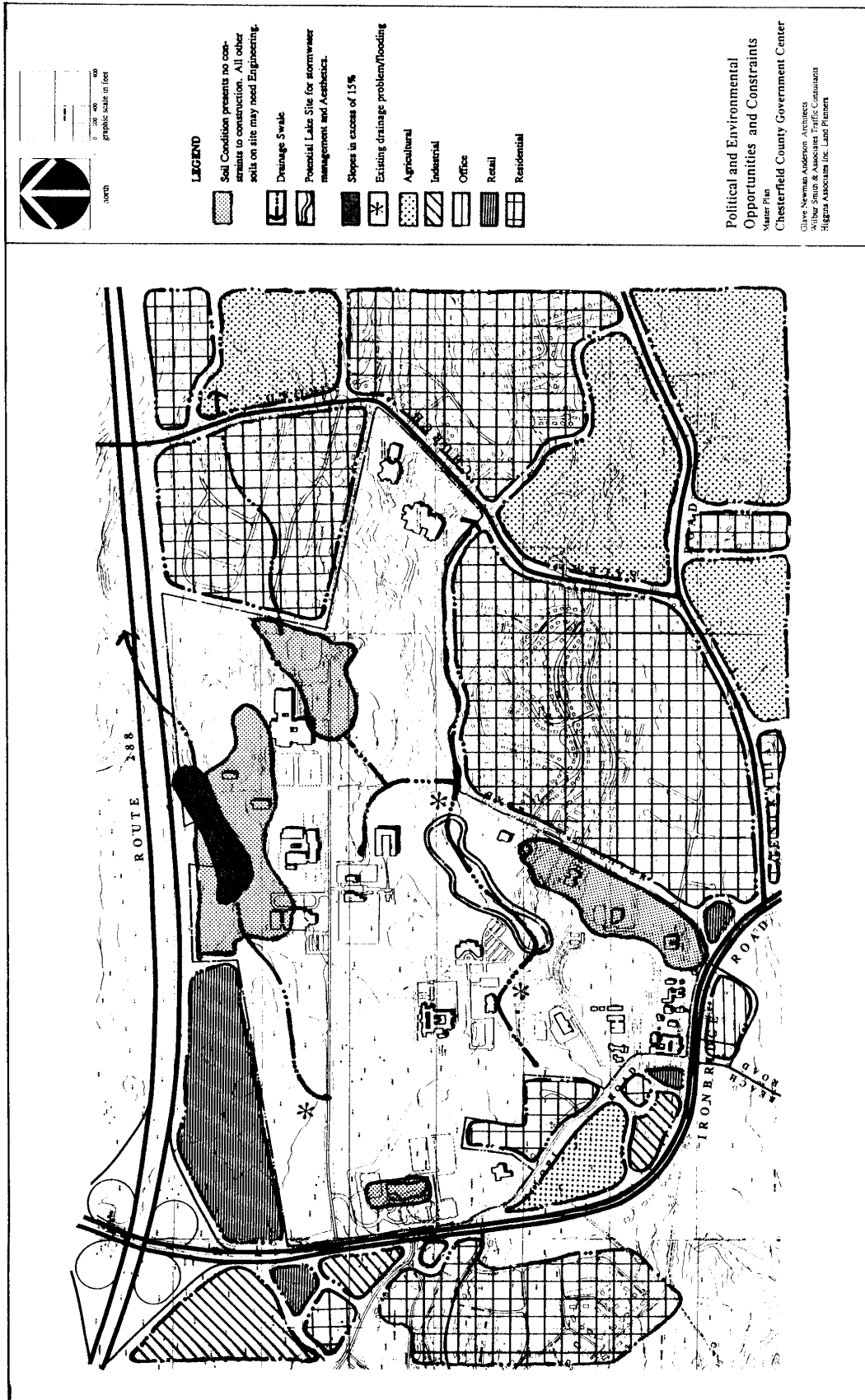
Soils of the first category, those that are most easily constructed upon, are primarily sandy loams, some of which have a loamy subsoil. They are described as being deep, well drained, and are gently sloping. They occur on the site at the eastern boundary along Krause Road, and surrounding slopes of the swale to the north of the site.

Soils of the second category are also characterized as being primarily sandy loams, although these soils are more apt to have a clayey subsoil. These soils are well drained, deep, and are moderately sloping, thus the potential for erosion is greater. These soils are not prevalent on the site and are scattered throughout.

Soils of the third category, those that could potentially impose severe constraints to construction, are characterized as being deep, moderately drained soils that have a predominately loamy subsoil or that are friable. The major problem with these soils is the potential for them to remain wet for extended periods of time because of their poor drainage quality. additional construction costs are often incurred because of these soils.

The fourth category of soils include Fluvaquents and Aquults which are deep, poorly drained soils and are found in low lying or flat areas. Often these soils are from alluvial deposits, and are seasonably wet, therefore undesirable for construction.

The majority of the site consists of soils in the third and fourth category and are centrally





located within the site. Because of the abundance of these soils, they appear to be the most critical constraint to construction.

## **B. Drainage**

Water on the site is drained by two major swales that run west to east through the site, one of which is to the north, the other to the south. A slight ridge runs through the center of the site, separating the two watersheds. The ridge is more of a flat plateau and is the location of most of the poorly drained soils.

Storm water is handled at developed areas of the site through drainage culverts and ditches along roads. To the north of Courthouse Road Extended is a large manmade channel that leads to the northern swale. This channel, at the present time, appears to be oversized. Onsite storm water eventually finds its way to one of the two major swales.

The combination of poorly drained soils, and large expanses of impervious areas (i.e. parking lots) leads to potential drainage problems. In fact, through discussions, and from information gathered through previous studies, it was found that there is some flooding along the southern swale, particularly at road intersections. As development increases, there will be more and more runoff draining into these swales. Careful consideration should be given to future storm water management in order to reduce the possibility of downstream flooding, and it has been suggested that detention ponds be built to handle present stormwater runoff.

## **C. Topography**

The topography of the Chesterfield County Government Center is not an enormous constraint to construction. The majority of the site has less than 5% gradients. These slopes, without regard to soils or drainage, are appropriate for the type of building construction Chesterfield County is likely to propose.

Along the swales, the topography becomes steeper, sometimes exceeding 15%. Thus, there is the potential for erosion, as well as drainage and construction problems. These slopes should be stabilized with vegetation, and should be avoided for building sites. Because they fall within the banks of the swales, and the swales are so critical to the drainage of the entire site, it is recommended that these areas be preserved as open areas for passive recreation.

## **D. Vegetation**

The majority of the undeveloped portions of the Chesterfield County Government Center are heavily wooded with a mixture of both evergreens and hardwoods. Where there has been development, vegetation is scattered, except in a couple of incidence where care has been taken to preserve existing vegetation. This is particularly evident at the library site, and around the Education Administration building, where stands of pine have been saved. The effect is dramatic and should serve as an example for future growth.

Because the majority of the site is wooded, the opportunity exists to incorporate this amenity with new building construction. Likewise, the existing vegetation reinforces the park-like atmosphere that is proposed where land is set aside for passive and active recreation.

## **E. Surrounding Land Uses**

The Chesterfield County Government Center is bounded to the north by the future Route 1288, to the south and west by Route 10 (Ironbridge Road), and to the east by Krause Road, Great Branch Creek, and Church Road. Route 1288 serves as a major buffer between the Government Center and land uses to the north, as is has a right-of-way close to 600' in width.

The eastern land adjacent to the Government Center is predominately residential land, with some land currently zoned Agricultural. The majority of the residential growth in this area is single-family detached housing with some pockets of multifamily development.

Along the Route 10 corridor, there are a variety of land uses in existence, and planned for, that range from retail, to office, to industrial, to agricultural. Specifically, the area between Lori Road and Route 10 has an inconsistent range of uses occurring in a relatively small area, including multifamily, agricultural, industry, and retail.

## **F. Summary**

The significant environmental features that will affect future development and growth at the Chesterfield County Government Center are soils and drainage. Only a small portion of the site has soil conditions that present no or few constraints to construction. These areas occur along the northern swale adjacent to Route 1288, at the new Courthouse building site, and at the eastern edge of the site along Krause Road. All other soils on the site have the potential to

create some construction problems, and certain areas could have significant constraints, and will likely carry additional construction costs. Specifically, the area east of the new Courts building has poorly drained soils that are seasonably wet.

The existence of two major swales on the site offers both opportunities and constraints to future development of the Government Center. Because the swales carry a significant amount of water, there is the real potential for flooding and erosion in these areas. However, with careful development and planning, these areas can be preserved for passive recreation, in conjunction with detention ponds, that will serve both a functional and aesthetic purpose.

Adjacent land uses also influence what happens at the Government Center. To the east, land uses consist of residential development. The growth of this side of the site should be less intensive, in order to minimize impact on existing neighborhoods. Conversely, due to the variety of land uses along the Route 10 corridor, more intensive uses are appropriate within the Government Center. There is the potential to create an urban environment along the southeast portion of the site, by renovating and rehabilitating existing infrastructure.

## Open Areas, Passive and Active Recreation, and Pedestrian Circulation

**Open Areas.** As a result of the synthesis of the environmental and cultural analysis, certain areas of the Government Center are recommended to remain as open space. These areas are deemed as "sensitive areas" due to internal environmental factors and external development patterns.

1. **Passive Recreation.** The area along Great Branch Creek provides an excellent opportunity for preservation as an open space. Because of the need for storm water detention, this area is appropriate for the formation of several lakes surrounded by pedestrian pathways and wooded areas, creating a park environment. By using this area for passive recreation, it also serves to buffer the Government Center from the residential areas to the east, and would also be an amenity to these residents. This "greenway" is also proposed to extend along Great Branch Creek to Church Road, again, to preserve the natural drainage patterns, and to create an appropriate buffer to adjoining land uses.

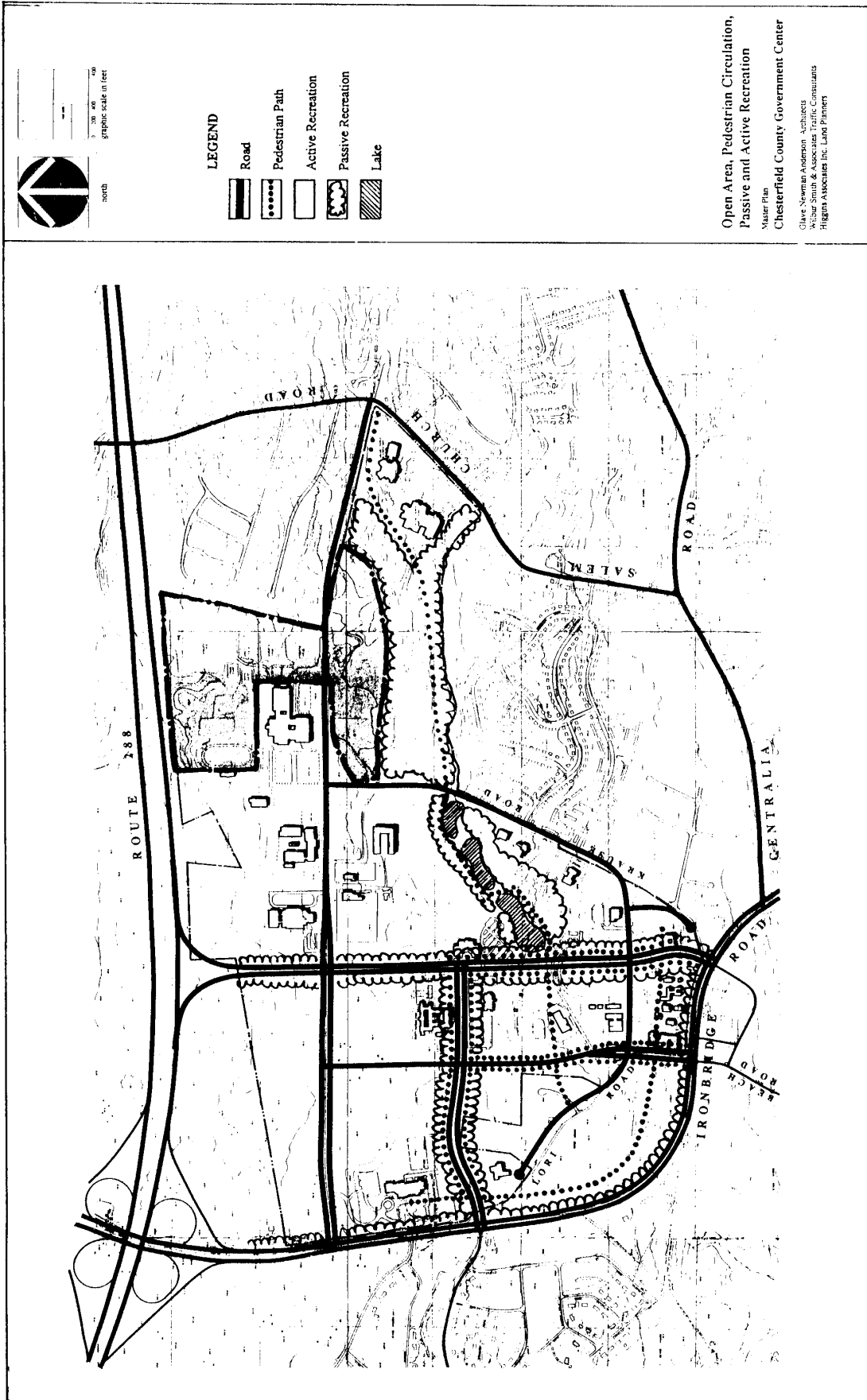
2. **Active Recreation.** The area surrounding Lloyd C. Byrd High School has already been developed for active recreation by Chesterfield County. Due to its proximity between educational facilities, the area of the site north of Great Branch Creek between Salem Church High School and Lloyd C. Byrd High School would serve as an appropriate area for additional active recreational facilities, and educational facilities, as the need for these increases.
3. **Pedestrian Circulation.** An integral aspect of planning for major boulevards that organize the Government Center is the planning of the pedestrian circulation system. It is proposed that these boulevards will be flanked with pedestrian corridors, thus giving continuous pedestrian access throughout the site.

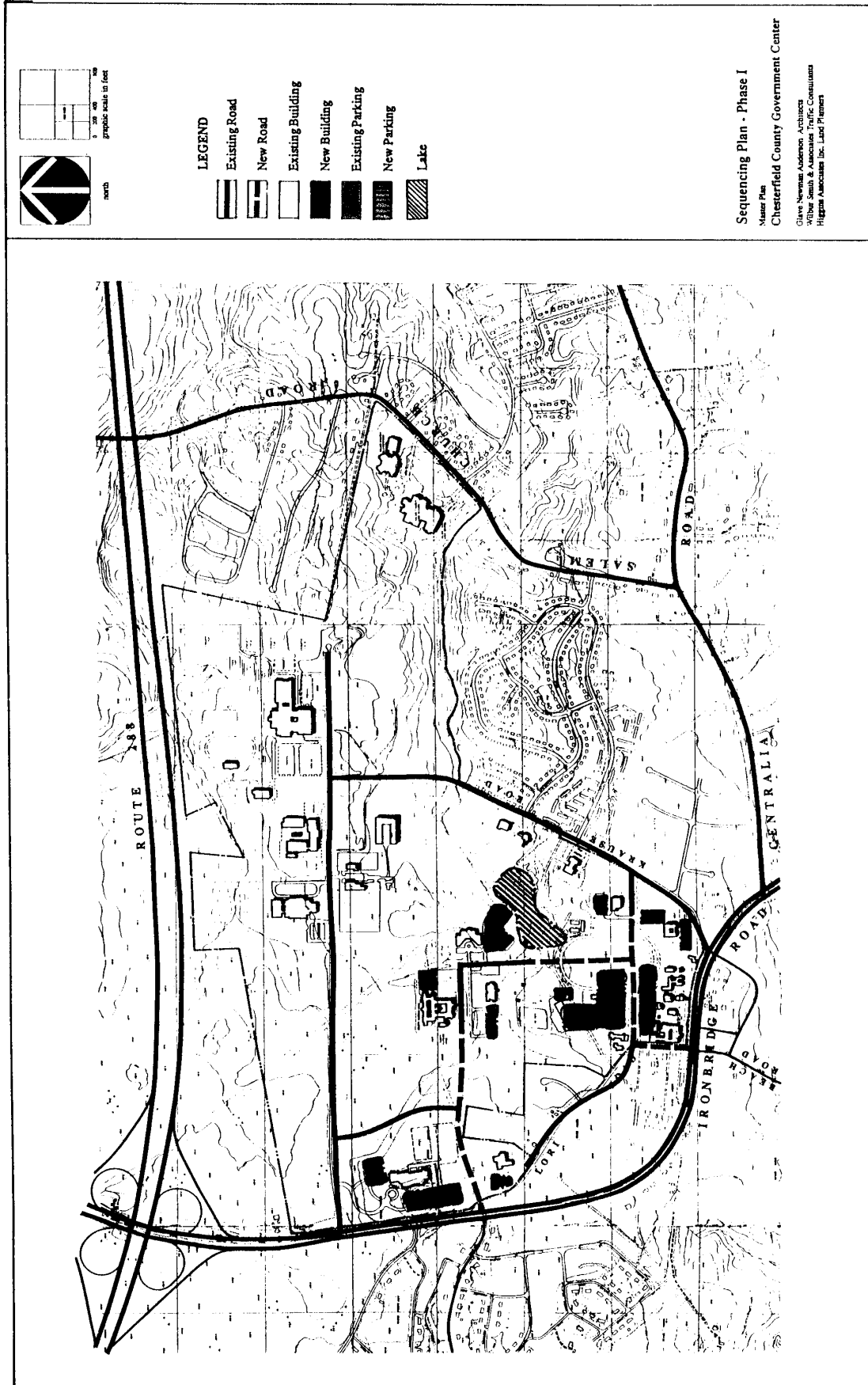
At strategic locations, this primary pedestrian system will be linked via secondary pedestrian systems to other areas of the site, such as the park to the east, the urban corridor along Route 10 leading to the new Courts building beyond, and through the center of the proposed construction along the north/south boulevard, ending at the existing apartment development.

## Sequencing Plan Phase I

Phase I encompasses work to be accomplished in association with the construction of a 100,000 s.f. office building for the Community Development Division. A typical floorplate for this building should be about 25,000 s.f. for maximum interdivisional flexibility, and this building should be located on the west side of the new boulevard at the north end of the existing fairgrounds. The fairgrounds should be demolished, and upon completion of the new building, the utilities warehouses should also be demolished. The garage may remain in place, but should ultimately be relocated to the new warehousing site.

Lori Road should be improved for about 500' directly north of Ironbridge Road west of the old Administration Building; a new road should be extended from Krause Road westward, intersecting with Lori near the jail. New parking lots should be constructed north and south of this new road to serve both the existing and the new administration buildings. Approximately 1300 new parking spaces will be provided (plus 500 more after 1989 at the new Courts Building), for a net overall increase of 850 spaces.





The new boulevard should also be started at this time, through the center of the old Fairgrounds racetrack, connecting with Lucy Corr Road a little south of the Human Services Building.

To the east of the new boulevard and south of the Human Services building, the first of three detention ponds should be built in this phase, to accommodate increased water runoff and enhance the environment around the new Administration area.

Major expenditures for these improvements (in 1988 dollars) are estimated at:

Landscaped Detention Pond	\$100,000
Roadways	\$700,000
Parking	\$2,250,000
Building Construction	\$10,000,000
Total	\$13,050,000

Road improvements in the vicinity of the new Courts Building are assumed to have been paid for within that contract.

## Sequencing Plan Phase II

Phase II improvements include a second administrative office building of 100,000 s.f. and a 13,000 s.f. addition to the Mental Health/Mental Retardation offices. This phase also sees the new Boulevard carried north to Courthouse Road Extended. Lori Road is improved for about 800' west of the jail and a new pedestrian walkway is built, connecting the School Administration Building through the old Courthouse area, across Lori Road to private development taking place behind the old Post Office.

New parking areas will be constructed to the west of the two new office buildings, adding about 750 new spaces to the inventory.

Major expenditures for these improvements (in 1988 dollars) are estimated at:

Roadways	\$ 1,000,000
Parking	\$ 1,750,000
Pedestrian Walkways	\$ 125,000
Building Construction	\$ 11,300,000
Total	\$14,175,000

## Sequencing Plan Phase III

The major building construction envisioned in Phase III will be a 75,000 s.f. addition to the School Administration Building; and completion of the Boulevard as well as major elements of

the passive recreation plan. Safety Town will be relocated and two more landscaped detention ponds will be built leading eastward along the drainage swale.

Approximately 550 additional parking spaces will be constructed between the new School Administration Building and Data Processing Building, and the pedestrian walkway system will be extended north along the Boulevard and also westward from the Phase 11 Administration Building toward the library.

The last leg of the Boulevard will be built south from the administrative parking lots between the School Administration Building and Trinity Church. Krause Road will be terminated in a culdesac before it reaches Ironbridge Road.

Major expenditures for these improvements (in 1988 dollars) are estimated at:

Roadways	\$800,000
Parking	\$1,175,000
Pedestrian Walkways	\$200,000
Building Construction	\$7,500,000
Landscaped Detention Ponds	\$200,000
Total	\$9,650,000

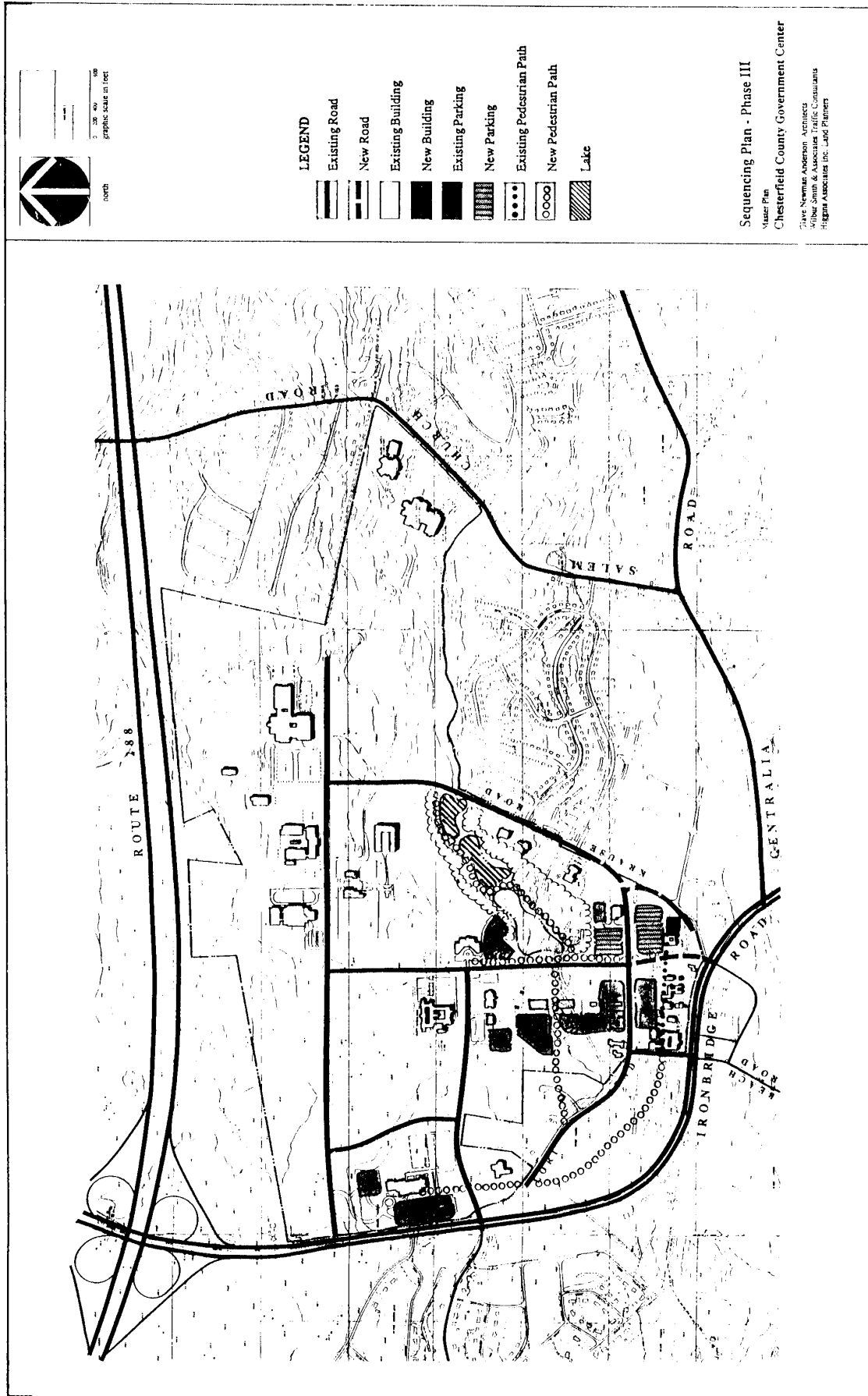
## Sequencing Plan Phase IV

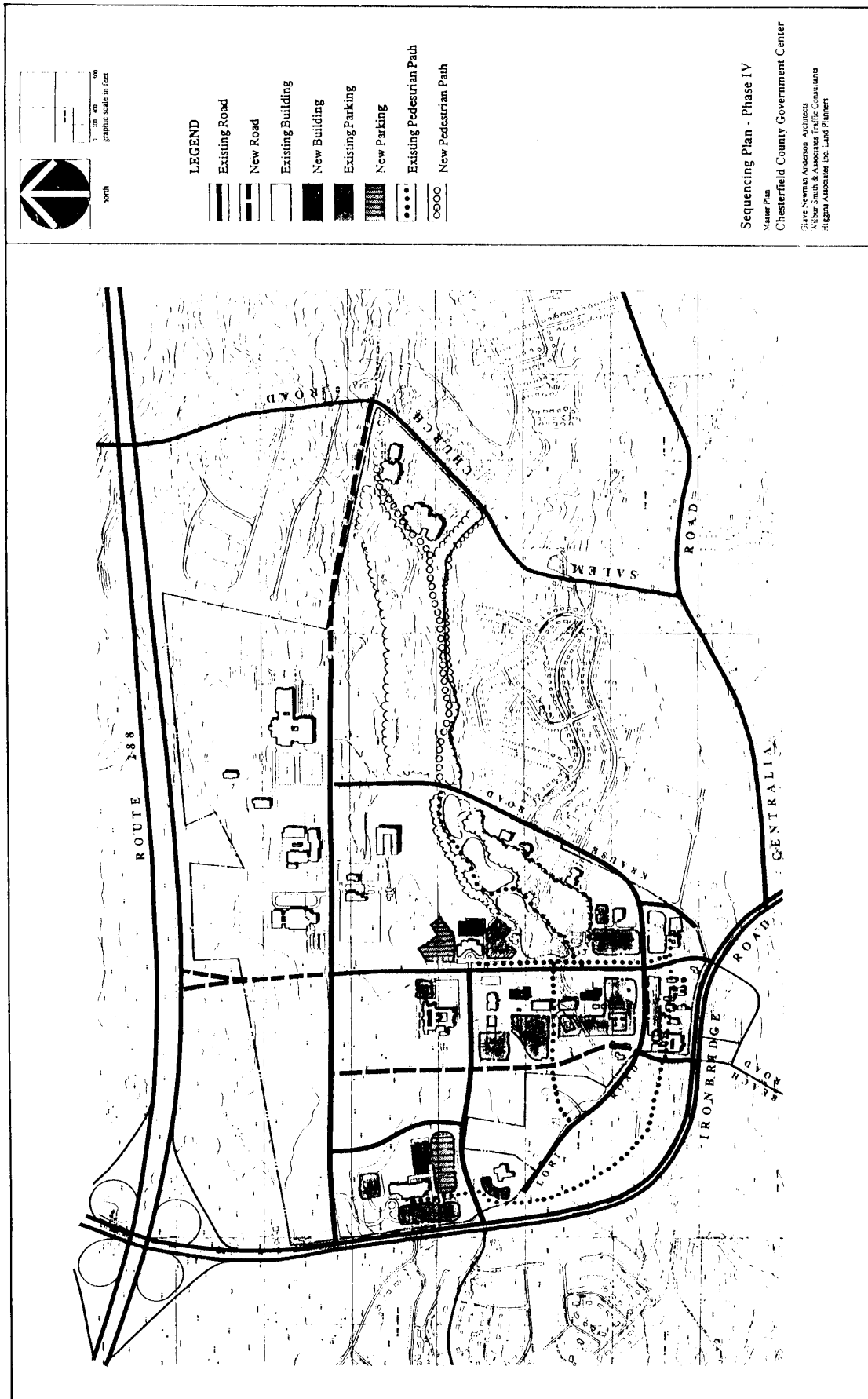
Phase IV includes work to be carried out after 2000. All of the currently foreseeable building space needs will have been provided for by the completion of Phase 111. The next 200,000 s.f. of office buildings should be built flanking the office buildings completed in Phases I and 11; beyond that, new office construction should take place in a zone along a new north/south access road that connects Beach Road to Courthouse Road extended.

The new jail will also be built after the year 2000 and 300 additional parking spaces with it.

The Boulevard will be extended north to connect with 1288 at the time that the Spencer Tract is developed, and will probably be a condition of that development.

Expenditures beyond Phase III will be driven by forces outside the bounds of conjecture and are accordingly not estimated here.





## Acknowledgements

The following members of the Chesterfield County Government participated in the generation of the Master Plan.

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